

Ellen Gerdes, "Persistence in Pedagogy: Teaching Failure, Empathy, and Citation," *Lateral* 6.2(2017).

<https://doi.org/10.25158/L6.2.5>

This content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Copyright is retained by authors.

Issue 6.2 (Winter 2017) – Not a Trump Issue

Persistence in Pedagogy: Teaching Failure, Empathy, and Citation

Ellen Gerdes

ABSTRACT This self-reflexive essay addresses issues of teaching and pedagogy for social change in the Trump era. It places current teaching reflections in the context of the history of the corporatization of the university, systemic inequities in academia, and current political debates. It expands upon the structure of a teaching philosophy in order to share critical reflection, relevant sources, and pedagogical strategies drawn from the author's experience teaching in dance departments.

Since the 2016 presidential election of Donald Trump, several universities made headlines for violence incited by "alt-right," neo-nazi, and white supremacist groups. Most recently, the University of Virginia saw the tragic death of a counter-protester at a terrifying white supremacist rally. And when anti-Trump and anti-fascist student groups protested the visit of "alt-right" celebrity Milo Yiannopoulos to UC Berkeley, Trump (on twitter) attacked UC Berkeley for not permitting free speech. While many "alt-right" supporters condemn so-called "political correctness" and take action under the guise of protecting "free speech," they ultimately argue for white patriarchal interests. Current pedagogical trends, such as attempting to make teaching more inclusive for minoritarian students and providing trigger warnings for victims of sexual assault, have been dismissed as coddling university students, especially students of color, transgender students, and women. As an example, in the Spring of 2016, prior to the presidential election, at UCLA, where I am a PhD Candidate and Teaching Fellow, Yiannopoulos was invited by the UCLA Bruins Republican Club for an event entitled "Feminism is Cancer" to "provide a critique of third-wave feminism as it relates to topics including, but not limited to, free speech, the 'gender wage gap,' 'rape culture,' social justice, cultural authoritarianism, and the emerging phenomenon of safe space, microaggression, and trigger warning culture on college campuses."¹

As the "alt-right" aligns itself against certain university policies and pedagogical practices intended to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, teaching the current generation of college students can feel urgent. Leading up to and since the 2016 election, my colleagues and I have had many conversations about how to hold effective discussion on current events and how to protect students and colleagues who might be targets of violence, harassment, and even deportation. As a response to Trump's election and the surging of both hate crimes and hate groups since, academics and K-12 educators have frequently stressed the importance of educating about these events via the format of the on-line syllabus and curricula.² For example, as Trump blamed "both sides" in Charlottesville, the UVa Graduate Student Coalition for Liberation had already prepared an in-progress Charlottesville syllabus—a collection of resources on the history of white supremacist groups, gentrification, eugenics, slavery, Jim Crow, and Confederate statues in Charlottesville.³ In short, an activist resistance often engages with creative education practices and reform.

At the same time, however, institutions of higher education can also be sites of limited change due to deep-seated inequities that exist in selection of students, hiring practices, tenuring biases, and pedagogies that privilege white, masculine, European and North American epistemologies. It is well-known that the US academy suffers from the same deep systemic biases as the country at large. As an example, recent studies demonstrate that women score worse on university teaching evaluations⁴ and that white men still get tenured at the highest rates.⁵ Moreover, neoliberalism's hold on the American university furthers the commodification of higher education, which privileges upper/middle class students who can afford skyrocketing tuition and disadvantages adjunct instructors (disproportionately women and people of color) who face job precarity, low wages, and no guarantee of benefits. According to Henry Giroux, the neoliberal value of the market place over education for the social good has resulted in decreased support for programs of study that are not business oriented, reduced support for research that does not increase profits, replacement of shared forms of governance with business management models, ongoing exploitation of faculty labor, and use of student purchasing power as the vital measure of a student's identity, worth, and access to higher education.⁶

In order to improve their teaching, faculty members might not have the necessary financial support in their institutions, where teaching practices and development are not necessarily prioritized. There is a lack of teacher training for college professors, and institutions commonly push for high-profile research. Eric Gould argues that, in fact, the corporatization of higher education, and along with it the conservative anti-intellectual stance and the devaluation of the humanities, can be traced back a century, well before our present political moment.⁷ He even asserts that the move to co-educational and more racially diverse student bodies in the 1970s was motivated by the financial necessity of keeping enrollment up.

No matter the offices of diversity, inclusion, and equity created by universities, we also need to prioritize teaching itself as a political act—one that requires the persistence and embodiment of social protest. The idea that teaching is political is not new, but universities have come under attack for a liberal bias among faculty and students. As Daniel Saunders points out, besides neoliberalism's effect on the economics of the university, the neoliberal attitude affects students by implying that teaching can be apolitical and that learning does not involve critical reflection or action.⁸ Michael Apple argues that denying the inherent politics of teaching curricula is hegemonic.⁹ The concept of "student-centered learning," although sometimes used as a buzzword, inherently asks educators to reflect on the power dynamics in their classes.¹⁰ Well-known critical pedagogues like Paulo Freire, John Dewey, bell hooks, and Henry Giroux assert that the experience of our students matters to their learning; that they are not just empty receptacles for the delivery of knowledge; that education can be a process of liberation rather than control.¹¹ For those of us who teach critical theory and cultural studies, we would be remiss to examine only our course content and not our teaching methodologies. I have taught as an adjunct instructor and graduate student in dance departments, where I value experiential learning that corresponds to the content: embodied knowledges, histories, dialogues, and socio-politics.

To me, student-centered learning means giving up some of my power as teacher; checking for student understanding and learning via assessment; and including the knowledge and experiences my students bring to the table. This includes their bodily experiences. Feminist educator bell hooks calls for true connections with our students that welcome bodies, emotions, even love, and spirituality into the classroom.¹² All of my students expect me to teach with compassion for their lives as young adults and their development as thinkers, and I hope to teach with vulnerability as well. At the end of any college class I

have taught, I am reminded that teaching is a process of profound trust between my students and me. They trust me to guide them to ideas and experiences in dancing, in writing, and in teaching that can disrupt their prior beliefs or assumptions. They trust me to take care with their personal experiences, thoughts, and opinions as we collaborate in class discussions. They trust me to be attentive with the work I assign them and evaluate them fairly. They trust me to be mindful of their physical safety and histories. The teaching statement as a document for self-advocacy in job searches or promotion can neglect the complicated politics, messy improvisation, and frequent failures of teaching at the college level. James M. Long advances four important steps to writing a “memorable teaching philosophy” for getting hired at a university: (1) “*Begin with the End*” and ask “In what ways is a student different” after taking your class? (2) “*Make Distinctions*” about how you teach a variety of courses, (3) “*Be specific*” about your teaching methods and tell stories as examples, and (4) “*Cite your sources*,” whether former teachers of yours or scholarship.¹³ In what follows, I expand upon my teaching philosophy and share pedagogical resources, strategies, and failures.

Teaching Failure

As a white cisgender female, I strive to recognize my privilege and bias. I attempt to hold myself accountable for the politics of my teaching by using self-reflection, peer feedback, and student feedback (and not just the university evaluations) as advocated for by scholar and poet Jamila Lyiscott.¹⁴ When teaching about Chinese cultural production, which is related to my doctoral research, I often ask my students to question my role as an authority. When they argue that I have committed significant time, travel, and effort to the study, which makes me an acceptable expert, I press them further to consider what privilege I might have as a white American scholar speaking on Chinese dance and publishing in English. And I do fail to see my privilege and bias. Recently, in a pedagogy course, I asked graduate students to consider strategies for anti-oppressive teaching based on first identifying their experiences of learning in oppressive classrooms. One student revealed that the term “anti-oppressive” was not working for her because she felt oppression was her day-to-day experience as an African American woman and felt particularly isolated in academia. In preparation for this lesson, I had thought of times I felt a loss of agency as a student (even as a graduate student), but I could not relate to her experiences of day-to-day oppression or isolation in academia as many of my professors and colleagues have shared my gender, class, and racial background.

Scholarship written by Lisa Delpit, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Nyama McCarthy-Brown reminds us that to be student-centered is to have concern for cultural relevancy, not tokenism;¹⁵ to include students’ knowledge and perspective in the classroom means to center their cultural knowledge—language, arts, even concerns for justice in their communities—within the curriculum. Teaching from a student-centered philosophy does not mean approaching a class with a savior complex but rather learning about students’ realities, what scholar Christopher Emdin calls *reality pedagogy*. His concept of *reality pedagogy* aims to highlight how students and teachers can co-teach and create a co-generative dialogue, drawing inspiration from the model of a hip hop cipher.¹⁶ Teaching with students’ goals, experiences, and cultural influences in mind involves constant reflection by the instructor—reflection not always encouraged in the academy. When it is clear that my students don’t see the value of the assigned work, that I’ve made assumptions about their lives, or that I haven’t managed to guide a conversation across lines of difference, I fail. And try again.

I return again and again to the motivation that I am responsible for fostering what Ken Bains refers to as *deep learning*, versus strategic learning.¹⁷ If my students cannot engage with the course material past wanting to earn an A, I have not tried hard enough to learn

about how to meet them where they are—to notice what excites and inspires them, as well as what challenges them to move beyond previous boundaries they have set for themselves and their thinking (and dancing). Regardless of my goals, I must also trust my students' willingness to connect deeply to material when I am thoughtful about its relevance to their lives. I find that when I begin doubting the time my students put into their outside work or am suspicious of their attention in class, I've lost the trust that I owe them. At times when I notice my frustrations or my students' lack of engagement, teaching is an exciting process of persistence. Just like when I call my representatives frequently, I sense failure repeatedly, and can respond with persistence.

Due to my belief in student agency and mutual learning, I often strive to teach in such a way to minimize my authority in the classroom. I borrow from Freirian inspiration to teach against authoritarian power structures. Of course, the election of Donald Trump made many Americans fear authoritarian rule, dictatorship, and fascism; there was even a theory floating around that Trump supporters shared authoritarian tendencies.¹⁸ Putting faith in my students and striving to be anti-authoritarian in the classroom, however, isn't simple. After the 2016 election, I've thought more and more about my position and responsibility as a white woman, particularly in relation to the statistic that more white women voted for Trump than for Clinton and in regards to critiques of white womanhood and the Women's March in January 2017. My white and class privilege permit me easy access to teaching in the university classroom, and I want to leave room for my students to co-create the learning environment. I make such attempts through active learning strategies such as students speaking in partners and small groups, via assignments that ask students to teach one another, and by carefully crafting the spatial dynamics of my classrooms. I have even recently worked to incorporate breaks from sitting to lose as much as possible the physicality of student obedience. These strategies, however, cannot change the overarching white patriarchal structures that remain in US universities.

When I teach the teaching assistant preparation classes in my department, the graduate students point out that giving up power in our classrooms will not affect us each the same way; more power is already granted and expected of white cisgender heterosexual male instructors. Graduate TAs who are women of color have frequently spoken about the way undergraduate students disrespect their expertise and authority, especially surrounding grading and office hour etiquette. I have also wondered when students speak over me, complain about the amount that I smile on my teaching evaluations, or question my grading procedures, whether they would treat an older white male professor the same way. In the academic system that evaluates student work based on grades, grading sometimes becomes a place to demonstrate our power as instructors, and for minoritarian instructors, grades can confer the authority that the students won't assume.

Undergraduate students' biases around race, gender, and sexuality are supported by universities' systems of hiring and tenuring that disproportionately privilege white men.¹⁹ Adjunct instructors, who often do not receive benefits or guarantee of continued employment, and graduate teaching assistants, who frequently work more hours than their contracts, hold so little power within the universities that, nevertheless, vitally depend upon our labor. Therefore, minimizing our authority or relaxing our power in the classroom is not always the answer. My students have taught me that it is just as valuable for students to learn to see instructors who are systemically denied power as experts. As another example, a former teacher of mine learned to use the title "Dr." to show her students that xican@ students can earn PhDs. While it seems ideal to shape a democratic classroom and undo authoritarianism in higher education, just backing away from authority isn't the whole solution. During the 2016 election, I also felt the failures of democracy—how to access information, how to protect voting rights, how to keep people

engaged in voting, how to support disenfranchised groups who would not be significantly helped by any election outcome.

With teaching failures comes necessary persistence. Sometimes, this involves significantly changing assignments and re-grouping as a class. In my graduate class for TAs in the spring after the election, an African American MFA student taught a lesson about dance and slavery. She had each of us choreograph a short solo, then asked us to perform this solo while pressed up against each other standing. We were physically cramped and our choreographic ideas stifled. Then, she asked us to lie on top of one another. By the time the fifth student laid down, we were concerned for the safety of the student at the bottom of the pile. I had to opt out because I was pregnant at the time. This lesson provoked a conversation about safety. What does it mean to approach a safe space and for whom? Was the student on the bottom of the pile any more vulnerable to harm than minoritarian students in everyday classroom experiences? A white female student suggested that the serious nature of the content might make students feel less able to opt out if they needed to; they wouldn't want to seem like they didn't care about slavery. In response, the student leading the session wondered at whether she could opt out of (historically white) contact improvisation exercises when she didn't feel like touching a partner.

We ran out of time. I knew upon leaving the class that the conversation wasn't over. I heard from several students that they felt they had left the conversation with something unsaid. Although I pride myself on thinking through feedback structures that allow the presenter agency, I worried I had failed to give the student more of a chance to lead the conversation. Even though we always felt pressed for time, I returned to the conversation the next week. We asked more questions about what "safety" could mean in the context of our classrooms, and whether safety was something attainable or even approachable. We asked more questions about "self-advocacy" and which students might feel more empowered to advocate for their position, opinion, or personal safety in class and why. We asked more questions about the importance of "risk-taking" because significant learning can happen when we are challenged, but not when we are in fear. Several students ended up in tears. We took the time to listen to one another and agreed that we might never fully achieve a safe space.

Teaching Empathy

In the above example, the graduate student led us through a process of choreography to empathize with the conditions of US slavery. In the end, we also empathized with one another's everyday safety both through the vulnerability required by her exercise and our extended conversation. Empathy, too, became a frequent topic leading up to the 2016 election: Should you block anyone with different political preferences on your social media or should you try to understand their arguments? How should you speak to loved ones who voted differently? Should you give them a chance to explain and try to see from their side? For me, I felt the limits of empathy. There were sexist and racist ideologies that I did not want to try on. Somewhat conflict averse, I wondered how to mediate varied political beliefs in the classroom. Could I really mediate a discussion of very different perspectives on immigration, for example? How could I protect my minoritarian students who might be attacked by such an open conversation? Isn't it my responsibility not to permit the "both sides are at fault" false equivalency promoted by Trump after Charlottesville? Still, I think that it is worth attempting a cultivation of empathy in the classroom and worth sensing its limits.

As a scholar of performance, I aim to guide students in a process of analyzing power dynamics involved in performance. We look together at the socio-historical contexts that surround the making, performing, and viewing of embodied works. For example, we might

compare the aesthetic of women dancing in a classical ballet, such as *Swan Lake*, with the ballet from the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the *Red Detachment of Women*. We contrast the support of the male partner to the female in the classical ballet to the assertive posturing of the army battalion of women on pointe. We view promotional videos for the hugely successful Chinese dance concert *Shen Yun* to ask what American audience expectations and Orientalist stereotypes are fulfilled by advertising this dance as “5,000 years of civilization. Live on stage.”²⁰ Especially non-majors, who take my courses for general education credit, might be thinking about meaning-making and issues of representation in performance for the first time. This type of thinking can, for many students, feel frustrating; performance is often, after all, quite abstract. Experiences with movement often give them access to both empathy and conceptual analysis.

To stop at the step of recognizing issues in cultural representation and critique does not accomplish conversation across lines of difference. And to only watch and discuss performance misses out on the potential for embodied learning activities to expand our thinking, let us feel vulnerable with one another, relate to one another more intimately, and approach empathy. For non-majors, this learning can take place through a dance workshop or even a workshop in everyday gestures. In particular, dance departments’ strong orientation toward the body allows for us to connect to urgent conversations surrounding the surveillance and violence toward the black male body in the US. The work on the black body in Ta-Nehisi Coates *Between the World and Me* and Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen: An American Lyric* pair well with such an inquiry.²¹ I’ve assigned students the texts and ask them to create gestures from excerpts, sometimes using the authors’ words like a score for the body and other times asking the gestures to represent the mood or concept conveyed by the authors. We shared these gestures and tried them on our own bodies. We discussed what came up for each of us in taking these words into our own bodies, and what might have been lost. In the humanities, European and North American literary (and patriarchal) ways of knowing and communicating are still privileged; arts and performance classes can try on other epistemologies that value students’ bodily experience in the world.

Teaching Citation

In the 2016 presidential campaign, Melania Trump’s words that almost precisely copied First Lady Michelle Obama’s speech reminded many Americans of the countless instances that white culture has appropriated black culture. As writers, we are taught to cite our sources and to conduct exhaustive research in order to ascertain original contributions; otherwise, we face punitive consequences. As educators, we use our syllabi as a means for citing written sources, but we don’t always acknowledge the lineage of our teaching methods. In dance technique classes, it is common practice to borrow movement warm-ups and sequences from our teachers. I have had teachers who name the origins of the movement or the lineage, which not only gives credit where credit is due but also evidences dance lineages outside of European and North American white dance. As teachers, we bring a lot of people into the room with us—authors, guest teachers, mentors, community members. In every class I teach, I enjoy bringing in guests who can provide different teaching methods and share different life experiences than me. In addition, I reference my teachers; sometimes, this means showing video, such as of my Chinese dance teachers, so that students also see my embodiment of movement as a process of translation. Recently, I began asking my students to tell me about their significant teachers via an audio essay. This assignment gives me a lens into meaningful transitions in their lives and important aspects of their identities.

When I begin creating a syllabus for a course, I search for reading material that is both accessible (financially and content-wise) and disciplinarily diverse. I have been inspired by

anthropologist Angela Jenks's recommendations to professors to avoid over-assigning work, especially keeping in mind students that work their way through college.²² I borrow a strategy from one of my mentors, Sarah Hilsendager, assigning different groups of students different readings depending on relevance to their interest, in order to attain a breadth of readings in the class without overloading each student and provide a structure for students to teach each other content.²³ I also look at the authors as a whole in terms of representations of gender, race, and ethnicity, and even authors who work outside the academy. When I ask students to present on their readings, I include in the assignment the task of looking up the author to share with the class. I find that students can slip into misgendering all authors as "he," or can be unaware of who teaches in their home university . . . or even the range of universities and communities that produce research.

My mentors were not lecturers, but in the academy, lecturing is often viewed as quintessential college teaching. Oration, of course, is also associated with a male style of expressing knowledge, which was much discussed during the 2016 presidential campaign.²⁴ Some lecturers are incredibly engaging, but I find myself in agreement with bell hooks who has critiqued the lecture as a spectacle or performance for passive participants: "When we as a culture begin to be serious about teaching and learning, the large lecture will no longer occupy the prominent space that has held for years."²⁵ Another one of my pedagogy mentors, Karen Bond, has general education students design and lead a dance experience in relation to a reading rather than present on the "main points."²⁶ I find this a wonderfully difficult critical thinking assignment and borrow this strategy. How do we translate these ideas into bodily action? It is not a straightforward task.

The graduate students I work with also ask how to involve students in projects of social action, putting theory into practice, particularly outside of a university setting. As Henry Giroux and Susan Giroux argue, it isn't enough to teach our students to critique, but also to do our part as public intellectuals: "pedagogy's role lies not only in changing how people think about themselves, their relationship to others and the world, but also in energizing students and others to engage in those struggles that further possibilities for living in a more just and fairer society."²⁷ I return now to how the online syllabus itself has become a form for social justice—such as the revisionist Trump Syllabus 2.0.²⁸ I learned from my students that engaging with the syllabus as a means for curating knowledge gives them the opportunity to reflect on how they have been taught in the academy and revise for what they envision as more equitable teaching and learning. Assigning Raquel Monroe's article, "'I Don't Want to Do African . . . What about my Technique?': Transforming Dancing Places into Spaces in the Academy" has allowed both undergraduates and graduates to think critically about the politics of curricular design and to reflect upon how the academy privileges European and North American white aesthetics and epistemologies.²⁹ Instead of writing an essay, when students design a syllabus, they consider who we should treat as an authoritative voice, what we should watch, what to legitimate as knowledge, and what experiences we can have together that promote a communal learning process. Then, the syllabus becomes a creative act rather than the document of due dates and policies often ignored by students, much to professors' frustration. From the activist syllabus, we can learn that reflections on our teaching matter to political acts of resistance and that our teaching always occurs in conversation with others—those within and outside of our classrooms, including those who have paved the way forward.

Notes

1. For more information about this event, see the facebook event page. "Feminism is Cancer featuring Milo Yiannopoulos," accessed August 31, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/events/253819344970893/>. ↗
2. The Southern Poverty Law Center has been keeping track of hate groups and hate crimes in the US. After the Charlottesville protest, I saw the SPLC's "hate map" of hate groups shared by many of my contacts on social media. According to SPLC's annual census report, anti-Muslim hate groups tripled from 2015 to 2017. "Hate groups increase for second consecutive year as Trump electrifies radical right," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed August 31, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2017/02/15/hate-groups-increase-second-consecutive-year-trump-electrifies-radical-right>. ↗
3. The Charlottesville Syllabus was created with an intention for additions to the content. The authors write, "Use this document as it's useful to you, support each other, and take to the streets." "The Charlottesville Syllabus," August 12, 2017, <https://medium.com/@UVAGSC/the-charlottesville-syllabus-9e01573419d0> ↗
4. See a brief synopsis of a study by Stark, Boring, and Ottoboni (2014) who used advanced statistical methods to analyze student evaluations of teaching in both US and French populations. Colleen Flaherty, "Bias against female instructors," *Inside Higher Ed*, January 11, 2016, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/01/11/new-analysis-offers-more-evidence-against-student-evaluations-teaching>. ↗
5. Colleen Flaherty, "More Diverse Faculty, not on Tenure Track," *Inside Higher Ed*, August 22, 2016, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/08/22/study-finds-gains-faculty-diversity-not-tenure-track>. ↗
6. Henry A. Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014), 22. ↗
7. Eric Gould, *The University in a Corporate Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). ↗
8. Daniel Saunders, "The Impact of Neoliberalism on College Students," *Journal of College and Character* 8, no. 5 (2007). ↗
9. Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004). ↗
10. James M. Long offers job applicants advice on how to write a teaching philosophy document that will stand out in a pile of teaching philosophies that claim "student-centered" learning. James M. Long, "4 Steps to a Memorable Teaching Philosophy," *Chronicle for Higher Education*, August 29, 2010, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/4-Steps-to-a-Memorable/124199/>. ↗
11. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000); John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1963); bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Henry A. Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning* (Granby, Mass: Bergin & Garvey, 1988). ↗
12. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*. ↗
13. Long, "4 Steps to a Memorable Teaching Philosophy." ↗
14. Jamila Lyiscott, "If You Think You're Giving Students of Color a Voice, Get Over Yourself," May 23, 2017, <http://jamilalyiscott.com/blog/>. ↗

15. Lisa D. Delpit, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* (New York: New Press, 1995); Gloria Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers Of African American Children* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2009); Nyama McCarthy-Brown, *Dance Pedagogy for a Diverse World: Culturally Relevant Teaching in Theory, Research and Practice* (Jefferson, NC: Mcfarland & Co., 2016). [↗](#)
16. Christopher Emdin, *For White Folks Who Teach In The Hood—And The Rest Of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy And Urban Education* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2016.) [↗](#)
17. Derek Bruff, "Fostering Deep Learning—A Report from the CFT's 25th Anniversary," Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching, September 12, 2011, <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/2011/09/fostering-deep-learning-a-report-from-the-cfts-25th-anniversary/>; Ken Bains, *What The Best College Teachers Do* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004). [↗](#)
18. See Matthew MacWilliams, "The One Weird Trait that Predicts Whether You're a Trump Supporter," Politico, January 17, 2016, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/donald-trump-2016-authoritarian-213533> [↗](#)
19. Colleen Flaherty, Inside Higher Ed, August 22, 2016, "More Diverse Faculty, not on Tenure Track," <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/08/22/study-finds-gains-faculty-diversity-not-tenure-track>. [↗](#)
20. "Shen Yun," accessed August 31, 2017, <https://www.mccawhall.com/events/detail/shen-yun-1>. [↗](#)
21. Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York : Spiegel & Grau, 2015); Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: an American Lyric* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2014). [↗](#)
22. I think of it as my responsibility to motivate students to understand their outside work as essential to their learning and integral to our learning as a class community. I like to share this piece with my graduate teaching assistants: Angela Jenks, "Why Don't Students Read?" Teaching Tools, *Cultural Anthropology*, August 19, 2016, <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/948-why-don-t-students-read>. [↗](#)
23. Hilsendager is a historian of American dance education. See her co-authored book: Richard G. Kraus, Sarah Chapman Hilsendager, and Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *History of the Dance in Art and Education* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991). [↗](#)
24. Amy Chozick, "Hillary Clinton Raises Her Voice, and a Debate Over Speech and Sexism Rages," *New York Times*, February 4, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/us/politics/hillary-clinton-speeches-sexism.html>. [↗](#)
25. bell hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 64. [↗](#)
26. Bond researches dance education from a phenomenological perspective with special attention to bringing out the experience of the students, even children. See, for example, Karen Bond, "'Boys Are Morons. Girls Are Gross': Let's Dance" in *Dance and Gender: An Evidence-Based Approach*, ed. Wendy Oliver and Douglas S. Risner (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2017). [↗](#)
27. Henry A. Giroux and Susan S. Giroux, *Take Back Higher Education: Race, Youth, and the Crisis of Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 97. [↗](#)

28. See, for example, "Islamophobia is Racism: Resource for Teaching and Learning about Anti-Muslim Racism in the United States," accessed August 31, 2017, <https://islamophobiaistracism.wordpress.com/>; N. D. B. Connolly and Keisha N. Blain, "Trump Syllabus 2.0," Public Books, June 28, 2016, <http://www.publicbooks.org/trump-syllabus-2-0/>. "Trump Syllabus 2.0" is a response to an earlier Trump syllabus put forth by the Chronicle of Higher Education that had hypocritically promoted work of straight, white scholars. This course was created by two scholars of color, N.D.B. Connolly and Keisha N. Blain, who are both historians. It draws from many scholars and disciplines. [↗](#)
29. Raquel L. Monroe, "I Don't Want to Do African . . . What about my Technique?: Transforming Dancing Places into Spaces in the Academy," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 6 (2011). [↗](#)

[Bio](#)



Ellen Gerdes

Ellen Gerdes is a PhD candidate in Culture and Performance at UCLA. Her dissertation focuses on intersections of politics and performance in Hong Kong. After earning her Master's degree in dance education from Temple University, she taught at Bucknell, Drexel, Rowan, and Temple Universities. Her writing has been published in *Asian Theatre Journal*, *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies*, *Dance Chronicle*, *Journal of Dance Education*, *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship*, and the anthology, *New Directions in Asian American Dance*. In 2007, the Association for Asian Performance awarded her the Emerging Scholars award. She performs in Los Angeles as a dancer and singer.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY) License, unless otherwise noted.
ISSN 2469-4053